

***Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts  
Bay Transportation Authority (AACT)***

*10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA. 02116-3968*

*Voice: 857.702.3658, Fax: 617.570.9192,*

*TDD: 617. 570.9193, E-mail: [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org)*

***Members Meeting Minutes***

***Wednesday, March 23, 2016***

***Board of Directors:***

Chairman - James F. White

Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

***Executive Board***

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Beverly Ann Rock

Lisa Weber

***Meeting opened at 1:05 PM***

***Reading of the Agenda***

***Introductions***

Attendees: James White, Ian Perrault, Mary Ann Murray, Lisa Weber, Reggie Clark, Angela Manerson, Bernell Stuart, Nadine Jones, Olivia Richard, Beverly Ann Rock, David Vieira, Jim Tozza, Nancy Miller, Deanne Sisco, Veronica Sermer, Rob Dias, Dee Whittlesly, Betsaida Gutierrez, Debbie Weathers, William Corcoran, Rev. Ellen Frith, Joe Quintanilla, and Gina Russo

## ***MBTA Staff:***

## ***Vendor Staff:***

Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce- Harrington, Rob Sampson, Jessica Podesva, Selena Walckner, Chief Kenneth Green, and Frank Oglesby Ray Croteau, Steve Epps, John Tuttle, and Mike Rushin

## ***Other:***

David Chia, James Donovan, Yasi Abdol, June Scott

## ***Chairman's Joint Report***

*Chairman White stated the following:*

- He attended four meetings related to the Request for Proposals for the Centralized Call Center. The group has been moving at an accelerated rate (meeting 2 times a week, rather than once) to complete the process.
- Fiscal Management and Control Board approved the formation of a Task Force that will look at how to mitigate the cost of THE RIDE Program. They agreed on a modest increase in price of THE RIDE service, up 15 cents for regular service and 25 cents for the premium service, rather than cancelling part of the premium service. Without these increases, there was a risk of 9,000 people losing access.
- March 3rd meeting included identifying those eligible for free medical transportation paid for through MassHealth. For every individual using MassHealth instead of THE RIDE, the MBTA will save between \$80 and \$90. Concerns included the safety

protocol and the vendors that were being utilized. Training for MassHealth drivers has improved over the past 10 years, although it is not as complete as THE RIDE. Mailers will go out to explain the information once the text is finalized.

- Taxi Subsidy volunteer program is up and running. The service is encouraging utilization on short trips.
- Vice Chairman Rick Morin is involved with meetings with Uber and Lyft to try to find different ways to mitigate costs through the Task Force efforts.
- Department of System-Wide Accessibility invited him to the Government Center station re-opening ceremony where he had the opportunity to be the first of four people to enter the new accessible station and greeted by Gov. Charlie Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, and Boston Mayor Martin Walsh.

**A consumer** commented that she is glad that THE RIDE is kept at a relatively low price and happy that the quality of service is improving.

## ***MBTA and Vendor Reports***

### **MBTA Transit Police Department**

***Kenneth Green, Police Chief*** gave no updates but did take questions.

**D. Vieira** commented about the Hyde Park Commuter Rail Station's lack of police presence during school dismissal to help with crowd control, although there may have been non-uniformed officers. Chief Green indicated that on March 16, his officers took a gun away from a

child at that same location; he indicated that a presence is there normally. He would research the issue.

**Chairman White** thanked Chief Green.

## ***MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services***

***Rob Sampson, Manager for System-Wide Accessibility,*** distributed his report and gave a brief update on the following activities:

The Vehicle Access Advisory Committee (VAAC) is working to revise the priority seating signage for all vehicles. The new signage is now in design and, if approved, they are hoping that the upcoming procurement for the Orange and Red Line cars will include that signage, as well as the next cycle of procurement for the low-floor buses. The new design will feature higher contrast and much stronger language.

**A consumer** asked about enforcement of priority seating. *R. Sampson* mentioned that the drivers should ask individuals in priority seating to yield the seat and help them find a new seat. There are no procedures or guidelines to encourage an individual to move; it is the honor system.

**J. Tozza** commented that there are still no clear accessible directions to transfer from the Red Line to the Orange Line without paying a second time at Downtown Crossing. *R. Sampson* stated that additional wayfinding signs should have been installed to direct customers into the concourse for an accessible transfer to the Orange Line. Additional elevators are being installed at the station to negate the need to go up

to the concourse and eliminate this issue. *Chairman White* suggested taking cell phone photos of confusing signage to report to the MBTA with specific examples.

**D. Vieira** asked about expansion of Charlie Store hours later into the evening once a week or on the weekends. *R. Sampson* stated he would bring it up to the Marketing Department and asked consumers to file a complaint and make it official.

**A consumer** brought up the concourse tunnel at Downtown Crossing and the signage. The signs mention contacting a T official to avoid re-tapping your pass. There is a staffing issue that makes this action difficult and slow for those without a RIDE ID. They must wait a long time for someone to show up. Instead, people will pay again or perform a fare evasion maneuver to catch their train. *R. Sampson* stated there are no plans to increase staffing. The Operations Control Center can remotely open the gate if you use the callbox.

**Chairman White** thanked *R. Sampson* for his report.

## ***Keolis Commuter Services, LLC***

***Selena Walckner, Title VI Manager***, gave no updates but did take comments and questions.

**M.A. Murray** asked about Spanish signage and the downtown station in Lynn. *S. Walckner* said the signage falls within the language plan and Title VI requirements and they are still working with the MBTA to finalize.

**Chairman White** thanked *Ms. Walckner*.

## ***MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program***

***Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director***, submitted the OTA report and shared the following:

- Snowfall is much lower than last year.

He then asked for questions.

**J. Quintanilla** asked about the call center efficiency and information collected. What are the expectations for THE RIDE user and how much time a user was in the vehicle? Is there data now, almost 18 months later? Is it mostly anecdotal or are there hard numbers? *F. Oglesby* said they found increased time efficiency and less need for more transfers. Other consultants give information that leads them to believe it is worthwhile but it is up to others to decide. There are two dimensions to look at: resource utilization, and customer experience. It is hard to compare to different cities and it will happen in phases and will not be operating 100% until the beginning of next year. *M. Hulak* said there will still be a similar travel time. The intention of the call center was never to fully reduce travel times.

***Chairman White*** thanked *F. Oglesby* for his report

## ***MBTA Assistant General Manager for System-Wide Accessibility***

***Laura Brelsford*** gave a slide presentation on the re-opening ceremony at Government Center. All of the exterior doors are power sliding doors. There are multiple accessible fare gates now with four brand new stations, two for the Green Line level and two more to connect to the Blue Line level. There are multiple customer assistance

areas on each platform and two areas for rescue assistance. Government Station is the last key station to be made accessible and Secretary Pollack celebrated an earmark of an over \$150 million to Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure to help make the remaining stations accessible, with Wollaston and Symphony coming next.

### ***National Express Transit (NEXT)***

***John Tuttle, Operations Manager***, distributed his report and asked for questions.

**A consumer** asked about an audio/video system that is part of THE RIDE vehicles. *Mr. Hulak* said that audio will be turned on in the future, hopefully within the next month, to assist them with investigations.

***Chairman White*** thanked J. Tuttle for his report and acknowledged NEXT Corporate General Manager, Mike Rushin, who was in attendance.

### ***Veterans Transportation (VT)***

***Kevin McDonald*** distributed his report and announced upcoming PAT sensitivity training.

He then asked for questions.

**G. Russo** asked about several occasions where GPS went out on a Veterans vehicle and the driver was unsure how to proceed. She asked what the policy is when this occurs. *K. McDonald* said they were in the process of updating software; sometimes, this necessitates the vehicle returning and having the software reinstalled, while other times the vehicle can pull over and log back on. It is under investigation by the software company, but there is no policy to pull over. He offered to look

into the dates of occurrence. The contract with the MBTA states that drivers must have a street map book.

**A consumer** asked if all the vendors provided driver training and what the schedule looks like. *K. McDonald* said that there is a minimum of 80 training hours on how to drive, how to use equipment, how to evacuate the vehicle, passenger awareness, etc. It is also taught with recurring refreshers to seasoned drivers every two years. *Chairman White* said PAT includes ADA knowledge and how to identify different disabilities, including seizures, diabetic shock, and simulated blindness. Vendors will have dates for when the training will occur. Transportation to vendor trainings is free, but you must book travel arrangements in advance. National Express will have training once every month or two months.

**Chairman White** thanked K. McDonald for his report.

**Jimmy Donovan, political director for Local 25 Teamsters Union**, explained that he represented the vendor drivers and that he was the training director for their union. The alternates were unknown people to him and may not respond to complaints in the same way.

### ***Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)***

**Steve Epps, Director of Transportation**, distributed his report and announced upcoming PAT classes.

He then asked for questions.

**M. A. Murray** commented on her review of the GLSS report, asking for an explanation for the 2,377 abandoned calls. *M. Hulak* explained that an abandoned call can be from something as short as being on hold for five seconds and shifting to another incoming.



**Chairman White** thanked Mr. Epps for his report and opened the floor for discussion.

## **Open Discussion**

**A consumer** noted that she was happy that ridesharing is a choice and not forced. She asked about the threshold for accident/incident at fault levels, accident rates, safety measures, and the print report from National Express. *J. Tuttle* explained that at NEXT, an accident is defined as a vehicle to vehicle hit or collision, and everything else is reported as an incident. The degree of fault is determined by the severity of the damage. All are reported immediately to the MBTA via internal process.

**R. Dias** asked about the status of offering accessible transportation for the same-day service in the Taxi Subsidy program. *Chairman White* said it was not an ADA program to begin with and as a pilot currently it is restricted to eligible RIDE customers. *M. Hulak* explained that there are a limited number of accessible taxis in the program.

## **Old Business**

None were presented.

## **New Business**

None were presented.

## **Announcements**

None were presented.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.**

## **Notables**

The AACT Executive Board will meet from 10:00 AM to noon and the Membership meeting will be conducted from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except when noted.

Notices of AACT meetings are posted on the website of the MBTA at [http://www.mbta.com/about\\_the\\_mbta/public\\_meetings/](http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/public_meetings/). Visit the MPO's calendar page at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/calendar/month> to find AACT agendas, meeting minutes, and past meeting minutes. For more on AACT, see the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MBTA and AACT, the AACT Bylaws, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at <http://www.mbta.com/aact> .

Also, find articles about topics discussed at AACT meetings in the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/transreport>. For more information on accessibility at the MBTA, please visit [www.mbta.com/accessibility](http://www.mbta.com/accessibility).

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 857.702.3658 (voice) 617.570.9193 (TTY), [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org) (email), or c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (US mail).

The AACT meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities and is near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of the meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages.

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state non-discrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military Service. Any person who believes her or himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulations may, her or himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see above) or at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).

Members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services should do so through the MBTA Marketing and Communications Department at 617.222.3200 or 800.392.6100, TTY 617.222.5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, or the MBTA website at [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support/feedback/](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/).

***Please sign in at all meetings.***

Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible: date, time, location, contact person, and phone number. A written notice is always appreciated.